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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: TURKEY: FIFTH ANNUAL TIP REPORT: PROTECTION

REF: SECSTATE 273089

1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

2. (U) Post's responses are keyed to questions in Reftel A.  
This is part 4 of 4 (septel).

#### Protection and Assistance to Victims

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A. (U) The GOT issued 26 humanitarian visas to allow victims to remain in the country for rehabilitation, medical care, and legal assistance. The humanitarian visas carry a six-month residence permit and the option to extend for an additional one month. Most victims, however, choose to return to their country of origin, according to shelter psychotherapist Serra Akkaya, who counsels victims at the shelter. Victims were not required to pay normal departure fees or fines and the GOT did not take steps to bar re-entry to Turkey.

Foreign women detained for illegal sex work are routinely screened for sexually transmitted diseases. Victims of trafficking, however, are given the choice to seek free of charge psychological and medical attention, coordinated by HRDF and/or IOM, at any point after they are referred to the NGOs. In one extreme example, a victim who survived a jump from the sixth floor of an apartment building in September, is confined to a hospital where she receives continuing treatment valued at tens of thousands of USDs. Once in the shelter, victims may also seek legal services.

According to IOM and HRDF, the GOT has halted its past practice of summarily deporting victims of trafficking, referring victims instead to the HRDF shelter in Istanbul or, when unavailable, providing other housing arrangements. By late January 2005, more than thirty-two women were treated at the Istanbul shelter with another twenty to thirty victims waiting for access at any given time. IOM notes that many victims may have possession of their travel documents when they are rescued. In these cases, victims often choose to return directly home or to an NGO in the source country.

B. (U) In September 2003, the GOT signed an anti-TIP protocol with HRDF (see para D in the Prevention section) that includes shelters. No other Turkish NGOs currently provide such services. The GOT paid membership dues to IOM totaling 152,000 Swiss Francs. The Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality directly finances rent and overhead costs for HRDF's shelter in Istanbul. The GOT, in partnership with Turk Telecom, financed set-up and monthly charges for the HRDF-administered hotline for victims of trafficking.

C. (U) IOM and HRDF say the sharp increase in victims identified in 2004 (more than two hundred in 2004 vice two in 2003) substantiates police claims that they screen victims regularly. Since January 1, 2005, IOM says victim referrals for voluntary repatriations average about one per day. Jandarma and IOM participated in numerous training programs focusing on treatment of victims. IOM and HRDF note that police are "much more sensitive to trafficking issues" and that they "ask the right questions", a direct result of the training and the GOT's stepped-up TIP agenda. IOM is also organizing an April 2005 training conference for source country consular officers.

D. (U) The GOT claims, and IOM and HRDF independently confirm, that law enforcement authorities have halted the practice of summary deportation of victims. Instead, victims are immediately referred to HRDF for a case-by-case review. Officials note that many victims do not wish to remain in Turkey, in which case the GOT, IOM and HRDF cooperate to expedite the victims' safe return. Victims are not jailed, fined for visa overstays, or barred from reentry. Victims are not prosecuted for prostitution, narcotics, or other laws that would apply to non-victims.

In September 2004, Interior Minister Abdulkadir Aksu said nearly half a million illegal migrants were deported from

Turkey within the previous five years. Aksu noted that, over the same period, about 3000 smugglers had been arrested. It is a long-standing police practice to deport illegal migrants, and foreign women detained for illegal prostitution. In the past, subjects of most such cases are generally deported within two weeks of detention. In a survey of victims referred to the Istanbul shelter, only one victim complained that police had mistreated her.

**1E.** (U) The introduction of humanitarian visas, residency permits, and the shelter for victims of trafficking has cleared the way for victims to seek medical, legal, and social services. Victims have also begun to cooperate with police to seek action against their traffickers. In one case described by HRDF Executive Director Demet Gural, an Azeri victim of trafficking refused to provide any details about her traffickers or the network of forced prostitution into which she was sold. In three weeks at the shelter, however, the woman reportedly developed "a sense of security and confidence in HRDF staff and police investigators", ultimately volunteering to return to Corum, Turkey, and lead investigators to her traffickers. According to IOM Ankara's Countertrafficking Program Coordinator Meltem Ersoy, the victim identified at least one of the traffickers and provided written testimony to her police escorts. Police arrested the trafficker and recovered the victim's passport. IOM repatriated the victim days later. The case demonstrated a so-far effective system of cooperation between law enforcement officials and victims' assistance NGOs. Gural told us, "All through this process, the police cooperation was excellent. Police in both Ankara and Istanbul did whatever we asked them to do, including safely escorting the victim for her last visit to Corum."

**1F.** (U) We have no evidence that the GOT provides protection, beyond the Istanbul shelter, to victims or witnesses of any crimes, including trafficking in humans. The government currently operates one shelter in Istanbul, though plans are underway at the MFA to open NGO-supported shelters in Ankara, Antalya, Izmir, Trabzon and Van. Currently, the Istanbul Municipality funds the rent for the shelter facilities and provides the national hotline free of charge.

**1G.** (U) See para G in Investigation and Prosecution section.

**1H.** (U) With the exception of one Turkish citizen victim currently refusing voluntary repatriation to Turkey, we have no evidence that Turkey qualifies as a significant source country. Turkey does however, provide assistance such as medical aid, shelter, and financial help to internally trafficked victims.

**1I.** (U) The International Organization for Migration works with trafficking victims in Turkey and in the majority of source countries. Through its partnership with IOM and the GOT, the Human Resources Development Foundation (HRDF) coordinates shelter, medical services, psychological and legal counseling, and repatriation services in both Turkey and the source country. Both IOM and HRDF highly complement the cooperation and support they receive from the GOT.

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